



# REPORT

*From the office of the...*

## AVP Municipal Affairs

---

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly  
FROM: Stephanie Bertolo, Associate Vice President of Municipal Affairs  
SUBJECT: SRA 17N Report  
DATE: Tuesday, November 30, 2017

---

### **PROGRESS ON YEAR PLAN**

Since my last report, we have made significant progress on our year plan. Notably, we participated in forWard One by hosting our Cupcakes & Community Change event, where students were invited to submit their ideas for infrastructure projects in Ward One. Additionally, we completed our Municipal Pre-Budget Submission outlining our priorities for how Council should allocate tax dollars in 2018. Additionally, we are lobbying to City Councillors on this report, achieving our goal to increase our presence within City Hall. I am continuing to engage with the City as they develop their Youth Strategy through a recent meeting with the Project Manager Jesse Williamson. Additionally, we are continuing our transit advocacy through being part of developing a Hamilton Transit Riders Union with other municipal stakeholders. All of these items will be further elaborated on in the rest of my report. It is also important to note that we have decided not to hold a Shop the Corridor Campaign this year and instead delay doing so until construction on the LRT corridor begins.

### **PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

Last semester, we ran a successful Cupcakes and Community Change event. This event promoted ForWard One, which is this ward's participatory budgeting process. Residents had the opportunity to submit infrastructure project ideas. It was well attended and we received over 30 paper ballot submissions. The Participatory Budgeting Advisory Committee informed us we had the most successful pop-up event in the Ward and submitted the most paper ballots.

I met with Councillor Tom Jackson, HSR Manager Debbie Dalle Vedove, and Transit Planning and Infrastructure Manager Jason VanderHeide, where I advocated for better transit for commuter students. They are taking into consideration many concerns that I have addressed. However, they were upfront about how long the process can take on issues such as expanding services or rerouting buses. They hope to continue to have a more open dialogue about these issues and set up a mechanism for students to send their complaints and concerns directly to the HSR.

My committee successfully completed the Municipal Pre-Budget Submission! This submission demonstrates priorities for how students would like to see their tax dollars spent as the City is determining their 2018 budget. Our priorities highlighted are transit,

student retention and employment, housing, by-laws, and waste management. The full submission can be viewed [msumcmaster.ca/reports](http://msumcmaster.ca/reports).

We are coordinating meetings with Councillors to advocate for our priorities. As of this date, we have met with Councillor Sam Merulla, Councillor Tom Jackson, Councillor Doug Conley, and Councillor Matthew Green. They have all expressed overwhelming support for us going to engage with them. Some have never engaged with the MSU before. They did have mixed responses on our asks, but most were positive.

I had a meeting with Jesse Williamson, the Project Manager, Strategic Youth Initiatives who is developing the City of Hamilton's Youth Strategy. He is very eager to work collaboratively on this with us, recognizing the MSU as a large stakeholder in the city. As of now, the project in the beginning stages appears promising and we will continue to work with Mr Williamson throughout the rest of my term and my successor's.

Finally, Ryan and I are sitting on the Steering Committee of the Hamilton Transit Rider Union. This is an exciting opportunity to connect with other members of the city who are passionate about transit advocacy. This Union will likely help us to improve our transit advocacy in the future.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

Over the next couple of weeks, we will continue to meet with councillors to advocate for our pre-budget submission priorities. Currently, we have three more meetings scheduled and are continuing to contact councillors to arrange meetings in the future. As well, we will also be delegated to the whole council on February 27<sup>th</sup>, which is Public Delegation day before council begins budget deliberations.

In the next month, ForWard One voting will begin. We will be running a small campaign to promote voting, which we hope the SRA will participate in.

### **CURRENT CHALLENGES**

My committee meetings have not been well attended so far this semester. This is mainly due to the fact that I have lost two SRA voting members. Additionally, many of my members were involved in presidential elections and thus were unable to attend. This made it difficult to work with my committee to reflect on last semester and determine our priorities for this one. Additionally, I was unable to receive their feedback on the budget final draft of the budget submission. This term I am unable to attend AWCA meetings due to night class, though I will be looking for a committee member to attend instead. These issues will be resolved with the election of two SRA members to my committee this meeting and with presidential elections finished, this should no longer be an issue.

### **VOLUNTEERS (Commissioners only)**

My committee members did a fantastic job on the Municipal Pre-Budget Submission! Since this is the first time we developed this submission, it required a lot of innovation and research. I appreciate my committee's openness and leadership while developing this. As well, Ryan and I provided the committee with lobbying training to prepare them for the meetings with councillors. One or two committee members accompany us to the meetings, where they are able to advocate on the priorities we developed.

## **SUCSESSES**

A number of our successes have been mentioned throughout this report! As mentioned, the Cupcakes and Community Change event was a success and was highly praised by the PBAC committee. We developed our first Municipal Pre-budget Submission. Councillors have praised us for our methods of advocacy in our meetings with them and are happy that we have been reaching out. Finally, when we have posted about our meetings on Twitter we have received great engagement, demonstrating a form of approval from the student body and others.

## **OTHER**

Be sure to like and retweet our tweets about our advocacy meetings with councillors. As well, look out for ForWard One voting!

Best,

Stephanie Bertolo  
Associate Vice President Municipal Affairs  
McMaster Students Union  
[avpmunicipal@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:avpmunicipal@msu.mcmaster.ca)